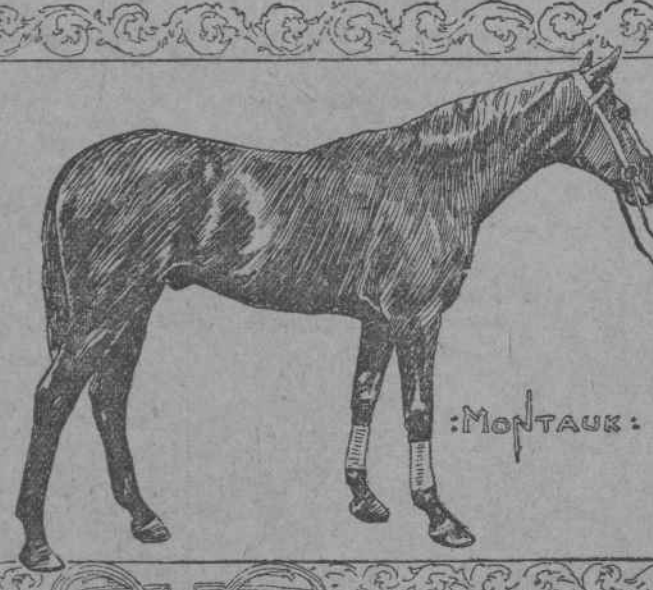
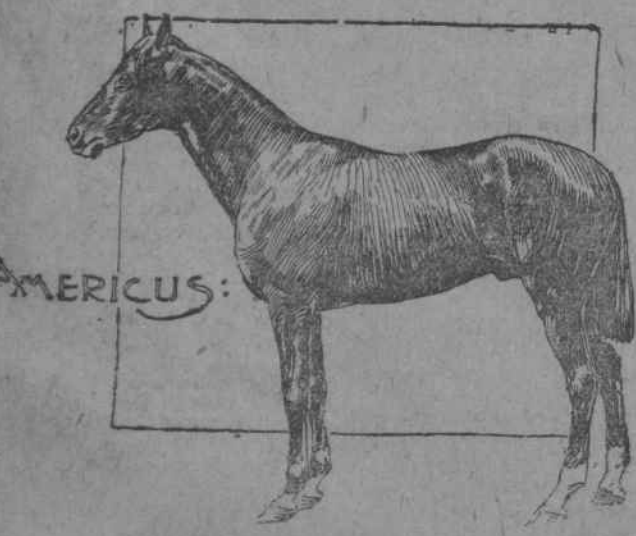
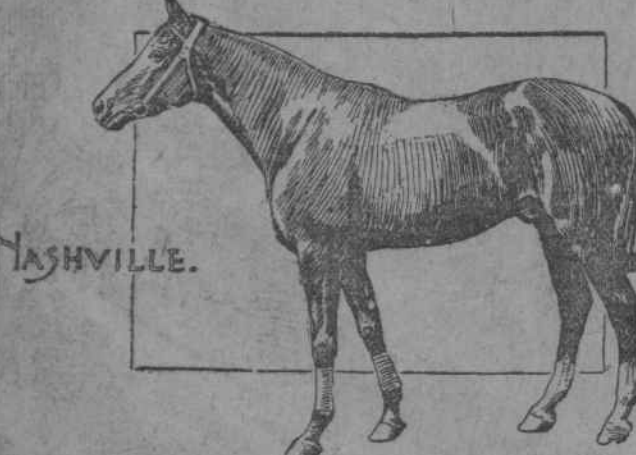
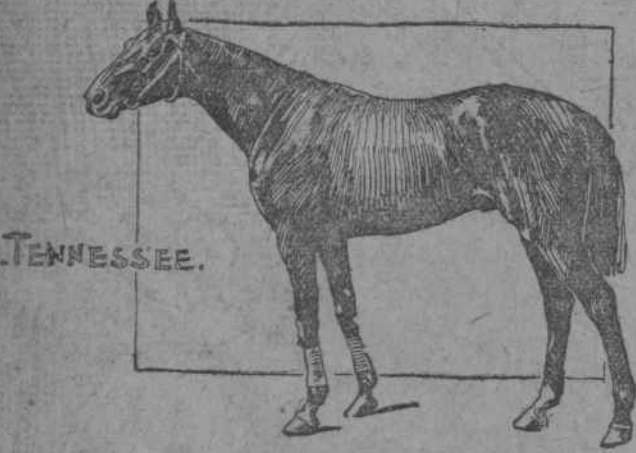


Mr. Richard Croker and His  
Big Racing Stable.

# THE TWO MOST CONSPICUOUS AMERICANS



## MR. CROKER IN ENGLAND.



In response to a cablegram from the Journal, asking for an article on the elaborate and almost princely arrangements of Richard Croker for the coming racing season in England, Mr. W. E. Gale, of the Sporting Life, of London, went to Wantage, where Mr. Croker both lives and trains his horses. William Edwin Gale is known for his initials and his high standing as "the Grand Old Man of sporting life." There is no man of higher standing among the racing writers of the old country; nor is there a better judge of horseflesh, riding, training, racing or any of the branches of the chief sport of England. What he has to say is appended:

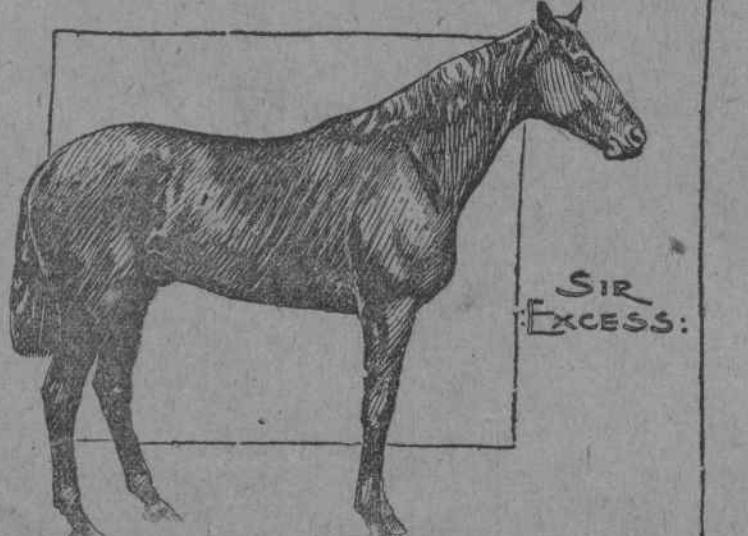
A staff reporter of the Journal in London was also sent to Wantage to gather the lighter, picturesque and human sidelights that need to be thrown upon Mr. Gale's more technical report. The report of the junior correspondent is an able and sprightly one, and is as follows:

London, April 25.—Wantage, or, to be more precise, Letcombe Regis, where Mr. Richard Croker is at present domiciled most comfortably and quietly, is the most up-to-date, old-fashioned, modern and ancient little village one can find in a month of Sundays.

It is in this quaint old West of England village that the former Tammany boss has his headquarters. His training establishment, "The Moat," is a big, farm-like place, covering about ten acres of ground, with a shallow stream completely encircling the house. It is an old country seat, and has been through a good many hands. Years ago it was an old, dilapidated building, inhabited by nothing except supposed ghosts, and on every dark night for many a year was given a wide berth by the quaking villagers. It was bought by a Mr. Fred Linham, and by him put in thorough repair. New rooms were added to it, and the ditch around it, which had dried up, was newly cleaned out and put in working, as well as

historical, order. "The Moat" took a new and glorious lease of life from that day. But until Mr. Richard Croker took possession little interest attached to it, except in the minds of the two or three tourists a year who passed by, with guide books in their hands and fairy stories in their heads. Now all is changed, and "The Moat" and what goes on there have become the talk of Wantage. Legend is responsible for the statement that "many illustrious people lived here"—English royalty, we are told—though what particular kind of royalty they were or what their names were, we are left to develop in our various imaginations.

Here Mr. Croker intends to live until August at any rate. Vans of new and costly furniture are constantly arriving, new garden walks are being laid out, and a general overhauling and renovation is taking place. The electric light to match the modern steam train out of doors, is being installed at a cost, I am told, of nearly



£1,000, or \$5,000 in plain United States. Twenty new rooms have been added to the house, making the total now forty.

At present Mr. Croker has with him only his youngest son, "Bert," as he is familiarly termed by the townsfolk (of whom more anon), and eight servants. As soon as the alterations and furnishing are completed Mrs. Croker is expected, with the other members of the family, for all the big chief's kith and kin are to spend the Summer at "The Moat."

Big as "The Moat" is, it is none too big for him. He has taken a large farm higher up in the village on a three-years' lease, and when this is ready he will install his trainer—the famous Morton—in it, and the best part of his horses, while himself and family will live at "The Moat," along with such favorites as Montauk and Americus and other well-known Yankee flyers. In the new quarters he will commence training and breeding in downright earnest, having to all appearances settled in England for good.

He has a large white and brown bulldog with him, which roams about the village at leisure, much respected on account of his open countenance and mouthful of teeth. Next to his horses this is the most talked-about four-footed beast in Wantage. But the villagers talk of little besides Mr. Croker and his horses. The village inn is filled with his stable lads, and the conversation invariably turns on their master's thoroughbreds.

Since the advent of Mr. Croker Letcombe Regis has become a second Newmarket on a small scale. Before he arrived there was already one training establishment there, but little notice was taken of its doings. To-day the very keenest interest is taken in all that happens in Mr. Croker's stables, and the chances of the horses he owns are discussed everywhere. I even saw the vicar looking out of one eye at a bit of horseflesh in the street, and I wondered, if I should ask him, whether even he would not have an opinion favorable to Americus and his chances for the Jubilee.

And yet, despite the stir he creates, Mr. Croker is simply living the life of a quiet English country gentleman. His horses and his dogs seem to take up nine-tenths of his attention. Those that are employed by him tell me he is just as reserved as ever he was in America. To put it in their way, he "seems to have occasional fits of abstraction." His broad shoulders, black beard and mustache are admired, as is everything else connected with him, and he is as much and more in evidence at Letcombe Regis than he ever was in New York.

### MR. CROKER'S HORSES.

W. E. Gale, the English Racing Writer, Gives an Interesting Estimate of Their Abilities.

London, April 25.—There is nothing more gratifying to English sportsmen than to welcome gentlemen from across the Atlantic, who will join heartily in all the competitive pastimes of which they are proud, and I need hardly say that racing occupies pre-eminently the leading position in the national category of sport.

When Mr. Ten Brock, a good many years ago, crossed over to England with a team of horses, I well remember the satisfaction, not to say enthusiasm, with which the triumphs of his colors were received everywhere, the climax in this direction being reached when his famous mare Prioresa won the Cesarewitch, after running a dead heat with El Halem and Queen Bess.

Then Mr. Pierre Lorillard established a still greater fame in the annals of the British turf by winning the classic races, the Derby and St. Leger, with Iroquois, who had arrived himself at the start to be a worthy son of his illustrious sire, Leamington.

These series of brilliant successes on American horses were continued when Mr. Keene sent over to Europe a contingent of horses, the best of whom proved to be that marvellously good horse, Foxhall, who established a splendid record that will probably never be surpassed, for its intrinsic merit, when he won both the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire, having previously secured international honors of the highest order by victory in the Grand Prix de Paris.

It is my pleasing province, however, to have to record the results of an exceedingly pleasant visit to Mr. Richard Croker's establishment, at Letcombe Regis, in close proximity to the quaint old town of Wantage, which is situated in one of the most charming parts of Berkshire. The neighborhood positively teems with historical associations, and is the centre of the market place of Wantage stand, a statue of King Alfred, which was presented to the town by Colonel Lloyd Lindsay, now Lord Wantage, and one of the chief promoters of the Volunteer force.

It is without doubt one of the most delightfully situated spots in rural England, while what is a still more important fact, is the beautiful range of galloping ground and perfect turf for the training of race horses within easy access.

Practically everything that good taste can suggest has been done to beautify Moat House, and all its surroundings, and, by the time Mrs. Croker, who has been spending the Winter in America, returns to England in the Summer, she will find her residence situated in a perfect paradise of rural and sylvan beauty.

Mr. Croker received me with great urbanity and hospitality. His is a place that accords with hospitality, for the interior of

the mansion is just such as a resident country gentleman may well be proud of, combining elegance and refinement with every possible comfort suitable for the climate.

At about a mile and a half from Moat House Mr. Croker has established a stud farm, which is a model of neatness and compactness, but which I fully expect will be considerably extended before this time next year, as there is plenty of available ground of the very best description for the purpose; indeed, a more commodious spot for the rearing of thoroughbred stock could not possibly be chosen. Here that famous race horse Dobbins holds supreme court as the Sultan of the haras, and, as mares of exceptional lineage have been mated with him, I shall indeed be surprised and disappointed should he fail to get some brilliant racers.

Dobbins, in a word, is one of the best stallions I ever looked over, and a splendid specimen of the Hermit tribe, for his sire, Mr. Pickwick, was a son of Mr. Henry Chaplin's illustrious old horse, who has gone over to the happy hunting ground.

The race career of Dobbins, I understand, was a most brilliant and sensational one, and but for the existence of another clipper in Domino, he would certainly have established the world's record as the winner of the largest amount of stakes, and superseded the Duke of Portland's famous horse, Donovan, who at the present time holds the proud position. Dobbins had a tremendously hard-working racing season, but so good is his constitution and so sound his limbs that he emerged from the ordeal without blanching, and is now as fresh as a two-year-old.

I would have given anything to have seen his sensational and never-to-be-forgotten match with Domino, on which Morton dilated so enthusiastically the other day, when he described to me how the race was run, which ended in a dead heat. I wish Dobbins all the good fortune he deserves, and that his owner, Mr. Croker, will have the gratification of seeing his progeny win many good races, while I am sure his presence in this country will contribute largely to maintaining the excellence of the equine lineage of which he is such a distinguished representative.

I found Mr. Croker the essence of hospitality, but the quintessence of reserve, so far as conversation was concerned—But at luncheon, with some half a dozen of us at the table, including two or three gentlemen renowned for their shrewdness and acumen in everything relating to racing, from the earliest stage of breeding thoroughbred stock down to the best means of executing a large commission remuneratively.

Mr. Croker was the thorough man of the world, and, as I noticed, on the quiet vive to gain information.

And now for the horses in training. On my first day at Letcombe Regis, after the horses had had their usual morning gallops, the keen and cutting east wind sprang up with such effect that although bright sunshine prevailed it was very properly not deemed advisable to take their clothes off in the open air for the purpose of having photographs taken of the most prominent ones for the Journal. Two days later, however, the elements were more propitious, for a more delightfully bright and warm day could not possibly be desired, and what was really the most interesting object of my visit came off without subjecting the horses to the least possible chance of catching cold.

The first of Mr. Croker's horses to be photographed was Santa Anita, a fine, upstanding five-year-old horse, who has acclimatized himself wonderfully and is now in grand muscular development. It is Mr. Croker's intention, I believe, to run him for the Chester Cup, with the big weight of 9 stone (126 pounds), but the fact must not be overlooked that the weights have been raised nine pounds all around, according to English racing law, when, if the highest accepting is less than the stone, the top weight is raised to that impost and the remainder in proportion.

As a three-year-old Santa Anita won the American Derby, at Chicago, under the name of Rey El Santa Anita, so that my readers will doubtless call him to mind without difficulty. Santa Anita was numerously entered for Spring events, but did not accept for all of them, and his subsequent engagement to the Chester Cup is the Alexandra Plate, at Ascot, when he will have an opportunity of meeting the aged Australian Importation, Paris III., at weight for age.

The second horse that came under my notice was Americus, who, when known as Rey del Carres, ran five times in America last Spring and Summer, winning twice, being second on two occasions and third once—not a bad performance.

But the readers of the Journal will probably know all about that form. Suffice it for me to speak of Americus as he is over here, and I can safely say that there is not a finer four-year-old in training, and with 7 stone 10 pounds in the Kempton Park Jubilee Stakes I look upon him as being treated very leniently. Judging from his great raking appearance, beautiful action and splendid fettle, he will find the mile track at Kempton exactly suited to him, or I am very much mistaken. For the race under notice he was backed so freely and continuously immediately the market had settled down into a legitimate groove that he became first favorite at the comparatively speaking short price of 8 to 1, but as such prominent English horses as Victor Wild and Whittle, who have to concede him 25 pounds and 14 pounds, respectively, are now freely supported, Americus has de-

clined slightly in the quotations. However, this does not affect his winning chance in the slightest degree, and the owner will be a fortunate man who can find one to beat him.

Americus will be ridden by a very capable jockey in Clayton, who has been riding the horse several times in his exercise gallops, and I have reason to know likes his chance immensely. Americus and Eau Gallie were both entered for the Wellbeck Handicap Stakes at the Derby meeting, but the former being in reserve for the Jubilee and the latter not quite up to the mark, neither of them ran.

The liabilities accepted for Americus after the Jubilee Stakes, I should mention, is the All-Aged Stakes, at the forthcoming Ascot meeting, and the Hardwicke Stakes, at the same place next year.

Eau Gallie was not photographed, owing to having a cold, but he is eligible to run for the All-Aged Stakes at Ascot, by which time, I have no doubt, he will be all right. As he made such an example of a good field of our horses for the Crawford Plate at Newmarket last Spring, it is quite clear that he is a very smart horse as a sprinter, and will be able to take his own part in any country.

Sir Excess was nominated in the early part of the year for several of the Spring handicaps, but the only one in which he can now run is the Jubilee Stakes, but, of course, Americus will be the representative of Mr. Croker in that most important event. Sir Excess is an elegant five-year-old bay horse, by Sir Modred, out of Dixie, and if he fails to win a race this season I shall be very much astonished, as a more beautiful mover never was seen, but at present he has no further liabilities incurred for him than the Jubilee Stakes, to which allusion has already been made.

The three-year-old Nashville is a remarkably nice colt by Iroquois, out of Boulton, and I observe that he is entered for the Home Counties Plate of 500 sovereigns at the Sandown Park September meeting, together with his better known stable companion, Montauk. Two more charming, yet entirely dissimilar, three-year-olds could not possibly be imagined, for, although both are chestnuts, they are very opposite in color and totally different in conformation.

Nashville, for example, is of the long, low, level type, on a set of well-formed, short legs, and looks all over like making a real good stayer, as I fully expect he will turn out to be before the year is over; but he is somewhat backward in development just at present. On the other hand, Montauk is as hard and muscular as his fondest admirers could possibly desire; but he is a trifle too high on the leg to exactly please me, and may find his big, heavy frame somewhat troublesome when the going becomes hard. However, he is not likely to experience much trouble in this respect until after his Derby engagement, which will be brought to an issue at Epsom on Wednesday, June 3. One thing is quite certain, that no candidate for the Blue Rib-bon of the English turf will be better trained or more eagerly looked over in the saddling paddock prior to the race. He has been backed for a tremendous amount of money during the last six weeks at shortened prices, and, in addition to the heavy investments on him to win outright, he has had considerable sums laid out about the contingency of his finishing in the first three. In his race at Derby, on April 18, Montauk acquitted himself most disappointingly, as he looked the picture of health, but was in difficulties before two-thirds of the journey had been accomplished. But I feel certain this could not have been his best running.

Since this was written by Mr. Gale the cable announces the sale of Montauk to Mr. W. Sibary, an English racing man, and that all Montauk's present engagements including the Derby will be cancelled.—Ed. Journal.

Montauk is by Strathmore, out of Spinaway; but this is not English parentage, for his sire is not the horse of the same name who used to belong to Sir Robert Jardine, nor is his dam the Spinaway who was famous in the late Lord Falmouth's magnificent stud, and who subsequently became more illustrious as the dam of that brilliant mare, Busbybody, the heroine of the One Thousand Guineas and the Oaks. After the Derby Montauk's engagements comprise the Home Counties Plate, at Sandown Park, in September, to which allusion has already been made, and the Doncaster St. Leger, for which, as well as in the great Epsom race, he is nominated by Mr. H. Eugene Leigh, who, I presume, was his breeder.

Tennessee is a very powerfully-built, good-looking gelding, by Iroquois, out of Tullahoma, and therefore an own brother to that famous horse, Tammany. Tennessee has never run in public, and the only liability incurred for him thus far is the same race at Sandown Park, in September, for which he is also nominated.

The string of two-year-olds Mr. Croker has coming on are not very extensive—fourteen in number, in fact—nor, so far as one could judge from seeing them with their cloths on, quite forward enough to fulfill important engagements in the near future, but in the Autumn I have not the slightest doubt that two or three will be able to win some races.

In conclusion I beg to thank Mr. Croker and his trainer, Charles Morton, for their kindness and courtesy, which has afforded me the pleasing opportunity of recording all the incidents of my visit and the prospects of the stable. Our artist, Mr. Frank Baker, Jr., also wishes to tender his thanks to those gentlemen for the privilege afforded him.

W. E. GALE.